

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
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INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY BANJUL POUCH
AMEMBASSY BISSAU POUCH
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PRAIA POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAKAR 5885

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OTRA, APER, CGEN, SG
SUBJECT: SENEGALESE VISA PROBLEM - CALL ON PRIME MINISTER

REF: DAKAR 5719

1. WISHING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MOMENTUM GENERATED BY ASST. SEC'Y MOOSE'S TALK JULY 27 WITH PRESIDENT SENGHOR ON THE SENEGALESE VISA PROBLEM, I MET WITH PRIME MINISTER ABDOU DIOUF THIS MORNING AT MY REQUEST. (SENGHOR HAD TOLD MOOSE HE WOULD REQUEST PRIME MINISTER TO LOOK INTO THE PROBLEM AND SEE IF SOME RELAXATION OF THE POLICY AS REGARDS AMERICANS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.)

2. I HANDED TO THE PRIME MINISTER COPIES OF (1) OUR AIDE MEMOIRE OF MARCH 16, 1978 TO PRESIDENT SENGHOR, OUTLINING THE VISA PROBLEM IN ITS ENTIRETY AND PARTICULARLY THE ADVERSE IMPACT IT WAS HAVING ON THE OPERATIONS AND MORALE OF OUR EMBASSIES LOCATED IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES; (2) A COPY OF THE ACCOMPANYING LETTER FROM AMBASSADOR COHEN TO PRESIDENT SENGHOR OF THE SAME DATE AND
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SAME SUBJECT; AND (3) COPY OF OUR NOTE OF JUNE 24, 1978 TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PROPOSING THE CONCLUSION OF AN AGREEMENT RELATIVE TO OFFICIAL AND TOURIST VISAS FOR NATIONALS OF BOTH COUNTRIES.

3. IN ADDITION I LEFT WITH THE PRIME MINISTER A MEMORANDUM WITH THE FOLLOWING SIX TALKING POINTS: (1) SITUATION IN BANJUL,

WHERE NOT A SINGLE MEMBER OF CURRENT EMBASSY STAFF IS IN POSSESSION OF VISA FOR SENEGAL AND THEREFORE UNABLE TO TRAVEL TO SENEGAL; (2) THE FACT THAT BAMAKO HAS BEEN FORCED TO REROUTE ALL PERSONNEL COMING INTO OR LEAVING MALI THROUGH EUROPE INSTEAD OF DAKAR BECAUSE OF UNAVAILABILITY OF VISAS; (3) THE UTTERLY RANDOM NATURE OF APPROVALS/DENIALS BY SENEGALESE EMBASSIES IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, INCLUDING FACT THAT SOME FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE RECEIVED VISAS WHILE OTHERS HAVE BEEN REFUSED; (4) PARTICULARLY DRASTIC SITUATION AFFECTING AMEMBASSY PERSONNEL IN PRAIA WHO ARE NOT ALLOWED IN AT DAKAR AIRPORT WITHOUT A VISA AND YET WHO HAVE NO SENEGALESE EMBASSY IN CAPE VERDE WHERE THEY CAN APPLY. NOTED PROCESS OF REQUESTING VISA FOR PRAIA PERSONNEL THROUGH DAKAR IS VERY LENGTHY, CITING FOUR MONTHS IT TOOK US TO OBTAIN VISA FOR CHARGE HOWARD MCGOWAN; (5) FACT THAT EMBASSY BISSAU, WHICH HAS TO MAKE ITS OWN COURIER RUNS, FACES SAME DIFFICULTY AS OTHER POSTS IN OBTAINING VISAS AND THAT CONSEQUENTLY DAKAR IS SOMETIMES FORCED TO SEND ITS OWN PERSONNEL TO BISSAU WITH POUCHES BECAUSE BISSAU OFFICERS ARE NOT IN POSSESSION OF VISAS; AND (6) CONTRASTING ALL OF ABOVE WITH SERVICE GIVEN BY THE U.S. EMBASSY TO SENEGALESE VISITORS AND DIPLOMATS: VISITORS VISA--VALID FOR THREE MONTHS, MULTIPLE ENTRIES; DIPLOMATIC VISAS FOR OFFICIAL BUSINESS VALID FOR TWELVE MONTHS WITH MULTIPLE ENTRIES. ALSO NOTED THAT ALL SENEGALESE OFFICIAL TRAVELERS RECEIVE THEIR VISAS WITHIN 24 HOURS WITHOUT PAYING ANYTHING, WITHOUT FILLING OUT FORMS, AND WITHOUT SUBMITTING PICTURES.

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4. PRIME MINISTER BRIEFLY NOTED ORIGINS OF NEW SENEGALESE VISA POLICY, I.E., THAT IT WAS INTENDED TO CONTROL TRAVEL ABUSES BY SOVIETS, LIBYANS AND OTHERS. HE SAID THIS SENEGALESE VISA POLICY WAS NOT MEANT TO HAVE ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS ON OFFICIAL AMERICANS, BUT OBVIOUSLY THIS WAS HAPPENING. HE SUGGESTED THAT ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM WOULD BE FOR INSTRUCTIONS TO GO TO ALL SENEGALESE EMBASSIES TELLING THEM TO ISSUE VISAS FOR OFFICIAL AMERICANS ON AN AUTOMATIC BASIS. PRIME MINISTER DIOUF SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO EXAMINE MORE CAREFULLY THE DOCUMENTS AND THE TALKING POINTS I HAD LEFT WITH HIM, AND PROPOSED THAT WE GET TOGETHER AGAIN WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK, IF POSSIBLE IN THE PRESENCE OF INTERIOR MINISTER JEAN COLLIN, AND SEE WHAT SOLUTION WE COULD REACH.

5. WILL KEEP DEPARTMENT AND NEIGHBORING POSTS INFORMED OF FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH SENEGALESE GOVERNMENT ON VISA PROBLEM.

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